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AUTHOR Gillen, Marie
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ABSTRACT

Since 1976, the Atlantic Institute of Education in Nova Scotia has conducted a series of workshops to help school administrators and school board members to develop their practical leadership skills. The services provided by the workshop program include needs assessment, inservice workshops, information services, dissemination of materials, and identification of resources. Unique features of the program include the following: (1) the program is practical and targets leadership skills through a variety of subjects, such as declining enrollments and human relations; (2) it is the only program aimed at the combination of school administrators and school board members; (3) the program relies on local educators for volunteer support and leadership; (4) the workshops are conducted in residential settings (hotels) with amenities to make the stay pleasant; (5) the workshops are advertised almost solely by word-of-mouth through satisfied participants and free advertising in their informational bulletins; and (6) the coordinator of the program is an adult educator, rather than a person degreed in educational administration. A random survey of more than 450 school administrators and school board members who have attended the workshops showed that the participants were enthusiastic about their experiences. Their responses showed that the workshops promote learning by establishing a productive environment, by giving participants opportunities to shape the direction and content of the program, by designing workshop content so that it relates to the real-life experience of the participants, by enabling participants to be actively involved in working with the ideas presented during the workshop, and by integrating evaluation procedures into the entire program. The results of the survey will be used in planning future workshops. (KC)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE: PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

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AUGUST 20 WAS A DAY OF DOOM AND GLOOM. THE NOVA SCOTIA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT'S RATING ON THE NEW YORK MONEY MARKET HAD DROPPED AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE PROVINCIAL CABINET WENT WILDLY ABOUT CUTTING THE PROVINCIAL BUDGET. THE EDUCATION MINISTER WAS CHARGED WITH HIS SHARE OF THE DEED WITH THE RESULT THAT THE ATLANTIC INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (A.I.E.) BECAME ONE OF THE VICTIMS OF THE FINANCIAL AXE. ON AUGUST 20, OUR DIRECTOR LEARNED THAT OUR FUNDING HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY CUT AND THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD SOON BE UNDERWAY FOR THE TRANSFER OF MOST OF OUR FUNCTIONS TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN THE AREA.

THE MEDIA WENT WILD WITH THIS PIECE OF INFORMATION AND WASTED NO TIME IN FLASHING ON THE AIR AND ACROSS THE LOCAL DAILIES THAT THE A.I.E. WAS DEAD. THIS NEWS PROMPTED A DELUGE OF LETTERS, PRESS RELEASES, SPEECHES ETC., FROM SUCH GROUPS AS THE NOVA SCOTIA TEACHERS' UNION, THE SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, THE PROVINCIAL ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CLANS) AND THE LIKE — ALL PROTESTING THE WITHDRAWAL OF FUNDS FROM A VITAL INSTITUTION AND DEMANDING THAT THE A.I.E.'S FUNCTIONS CONTINUE TO BE FINANCED BECAUSE OF THEIR VALUE TO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE PROVINCE.

IN NEARLY ALL THESE RELEASES AND COMMUNICATIONS, THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOP PROGRAMME, WHICH HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE SINCE 1976, WAS CITED AS AN EXAMPLE OF A VALUABLE FUNCTION THAT HAD TO BE RETAINED.

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AT THE INSTITUTE WE ALWAYS BELIEVED WE HAD AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME TO OFFER. THIS JUDGMENT WAS BASED ON THE FEEDBACK THAT WE HAD RECEIVED OVER THE YEARS AND FROM OTHER CONFIRMING FACTORS. NEVERTHELESS, THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF THIS PROGRAMME SINCE AUGUST 20 HAS GONE FAR BEYOND OUR WILDEST EXPECTATIONS OR DREAMS.

THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN LOUD AND CLEAR. THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT IN-SERVICE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY IN THE PROVINCE THAT MUST BE RETAINED.

BACKGROUND

EDUCATION HAS LONG BEEN A HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT. THIS EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION HAS OCCURED IN SPITE OF THE LONG-STANDING LIMITATIONS ON FINANCIAL RESOURCES ATTRIBUTABLE TO A RESTRICTED TAX BASE — NOVA SCOTIA IS KNOWN IN CANADA AS BEING ONE OF THE "HAVE-NOT" PROVINCES. HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF THESE LIMITATIONS, A STRONG, PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM HAS DEVELOPED IN THE REGION AND THIS SYSTEM HAS BEEN THE VANGUARD OF SOME OF THE MAJOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CANADA.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION DURING RECENT YEARS — THE SCENE IN CANADA IS SIMILAR TO THAT IN THE UNITED STATES. GROWTH IN TECHNOLOGY, THE INTENSIFICATION OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS, AND THE EXTENSION OF KNOWLEDGE HAVE COMBINED TO MAKE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL OPERATION A COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT SET OF FUNCTIONS. CONSEQUENTLY, A CONCERN HAS EMERGED ABOUT THE NEED TO UP-DATE AND IMPROVE THE LEARNING OF ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL IN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

IN ADDITION, SEVERAL MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS HAVE COMBINED TO INCREASE THE COMPLEXITY OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN NOVA SCOTIA. THESE DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDE:

1. AMALGAMATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
2. CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS
3. DECENTRALIZATION OF CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING
4. INTRODUCTION OF GLOBAL BUDGETING
5. THE ADVENT OF DECLINING ENROLMENTS

AMALGAMATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

IN THE DECADE BETWEEN 1966 AND 1976, THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL JURISDICTIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA WAS REDUCED FROM NINE-HUNDRED TO EIGHTY-THREE AND THEN AGAIN LAST YEAR IT WAS REDUCED FROM EIGHTY-THREE TO TWENTY-ONE. THIS AMALGAMATION PROCESS HAS CAUSED MAJOR CHANGES IN THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND HAVE PLACED MANY NEW DEMANDS ON SCHOOL BOARDS.

CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

CONCURRENT WITH THESE AMALGAMATIONS OF JURISDICTIONS HAS BEEN THE CLOSURE OF MANY SMALL SCHOOLS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THESE SMALL BUILDINGS INTO LARGE SCHOOL COMPLEXES. THE MEAN SCHOOL SIZE IN NOVA SCOTIA IN 1966 WAS SIX CLASSES. TEN YEARS LATER, THIS MEAN INCREASED TO TWENTY-TWO CLASSES, MORE THAN TRIPLED.

DECENTRALIZATION OF CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING

WITH THIS MOVEMENT TOWARD LARGER SCHOOL COMPLEXES, DECENTRALIZATION OF CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING HAS OCCURRED IN NOVA SCOTIA. ORIGINALLY, CURRICULUM CONTENT WAS PERSCRIBED BY THE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AUTHORITIES. IN RECENT YEARS, LOCAL JURISDICTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN A MUCH WIDER SCOPE IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL CURRICULUM. THIS SHIFT TOWARD LOCAL DECISION-MAKING CONCERNING CURRICULUM HAS INCREASED THE SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR FUNCTIONS WITHIN THE REGION.

INTRODUCTION OF GLOBAL BUDGETING

FORMERLY, PUBLIC EDUCATION COSTS IN NOVA SCOTIA WERE SUPPORTED MAINLY THROUGH A MIXTURE OF PROVINCIAL FOUNDATION GRANTS AND LOCAL TAX INPUTS. NOW MOST COSTS ARE ASSUMED BY PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES THROUGH A SYSTEM OF EQUALIZED GLOBAL BUDGETING. THIS PROCEDURE PERMITS CONSIDERABLE LOCAL DECISION-MAKING WITH REGARD TO THE ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND PLACES INCREASED PRESSURE ON ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARDS FOR PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY.

THE ADVENT OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT

CURRENTLY, SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS IN NOVA SCOTIA ARE DECLINING. IN 1971, STUDENT ENROLLMENT PEAKED AND THERE HAS BEEN A YEARLY DECLINE. BETWEEN 1971 AND 1981 — A 13% DECLINE — THIS DEVELOPMENT IS CAUSING PROBLEMS IN RELATION TO STAFFING, PROPERTY UTILIZATION, STUDENT TRANSPORTATION, AND GENERAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION. SCHOOL BOARDS AND ADMINISTRATORS ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY DEVELOPING STRATEGY PROCEDURES FOR MEETING THIS OCCURRENCE.

SET AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OF DEVELOPMENT IS THE OBVIOUS NEED FOR IN-SERVICE, CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AS A VEHICLE FOR IMPROVING THE SKILLS OF THE AREAS' EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS.

BEFORE 1976, OPPORTUNITIES FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IN THE REGION WAS SEVERELY LIMITED OR IN SOME CASES DID NOT EXIST AT ALL. SOME OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE MARITIME REGION OFFERED CREDIT COURSES IN SPECIFIC FACETS OF ADMINISTRATION. HOWEVER, MOST OF THE COURSES WERE THEORY-ORIENTED AND WERE NOT USEFUL IN DEVELOPING AND SHARPENING LEADERSHIP SKILLS. AS WELL, THESE COURSES WERE OFTEN NOT ACCESSIBLE FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS. THESE TWO GROUPS BECAME A COMMUNITY IN NEED OF A COMMON LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

SUBSTANTIALLY, THEN, NO SINGLE INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION IN THE MARITIME REGION WAS PROVIDING AN ON-GOING, PRACTICAL PROGRAM FOR THESE EDUCATORS. THE ATLANTIC INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION WITH THE COOPERATION OF A NUMBER OF CONSTITUENT GROUPS INITIATED SUCH A PROGRAM.

THE WORKSHOP SERIES

ESSENTIALLY, THE WORKSHOP SERIES IS AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF NOVA SCOTIA'S EDUCATIONAL LEADERS THROUGH PROVISION OF A FORUM WHERE KNOWLEDGE IS ATTAINED, SKILLS ARE DEVELOPED AND COMMUNICATIONS ARE IMPROVED. THE SERVICES

ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOP PROGRAMME ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT
2. IN-SERVICE WORKSHOPS
3. INFORMATION SERVICES
4. DISSEMINATION OF MATERIALS
5. IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES

SOME OF THESE SERVICES, SUCH AS A NEEDS ASSESSMENT, CAN BE CONDUCTED INDEPENDENTLY BUT ON THE WHOLE THESE SERVICES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORKSHOP PROCESS.

TONIGHT, I PLAN TO DISCUSS TWO TOPICS RELATED TO OUR WORKSHOP PROGRAMME:

1. UNIQUE FEATURES OF OUR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME
2. RESULTS OF A STUDY TO ASSESS THE LEARNING IMPACT OF THESE WORKSHOPS.

FOLLOWING THIS PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL, I WILL THEN INVITE QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, DISCUSSIONS, OR ANY IDEAS THAT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO OFFER.

UNIQUE FEATURES

TO BEGIN THIS SESSION, I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION JUST BRIEFLY THE UNIQUE FEATURES OF OUR PROGRAMME. UNIQUE IS TAKEN TO MEAN UNMATCHED, HAVING NO LIKE OR EQUAL PARALLEL IN THE PROVINCE. THE FEATURES THAT I WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

PROGRAMME
TARGET AUDIENCE
RESOURCES - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION
METHOD OF ADVERTISING
COORDINATOR

PROGRAMME

THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS THE ONLY PROGRAMME OF ITS KIND IN THE PROVINCE. IT IS INNOVATIVE BECAUSE IT BRINGS TOGETHER PRACTICING EDUCATORS IN A NON-THREATENING ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY CAN EXCHANGE VIEWS AND SHARPEN THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS. RESULTS OF THESE PROGRAMMES INDICATE THAT FREQUENTLY ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO COMMON PROBLEMS ARE GENERATED AND SHARED TO MUTUAL ADVANTAGE. TO DATE THE PROGRAMMES IN THE SERIES HAVE FOCUSSED ON SUCH AREAS AND ISSUES AS DECLINING ENROLMENT, LEADERSHIP STYLES, PROBLEMS OF HUMAN RELATIONS, EDUCATIONAL FINANCE, THE LAW, AND ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMMING. THROUGHOUT THESE WORKSHOPS THE THEME OF LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN UNDERLINED AND REINFORCED.

TARGET AUDIENCE

THE COMBINATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IS A UNIQUE COMBINATION UNPRECEDENTED IN OUR PROVINCE. THE CLEAR NEED AND SUCCESS OF SUCH A PROGRAMME DIRECTED TO THE NEEDS OF THIS TARGET AUDIENCE HAS BEEN CLEARLY ATTESTED TO SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SERIES AND MOST ESPECIALLY SINCE THE THREAT OF WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICES ON AUGUST 20.

RESOURCES - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DRAW HEAVILY UPON LOCAL RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS. EXPERIENCE SINCE 1976 HAS REVEALED THAT THERE ARE MANY SKILLED, KNOWLEDGEABLE, PRACTICING, EDUCATIONAL LEADERS WHO ARE WILLING TO VOLUNTEER THEIR EXPERTISE IN THE ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT OF THE WORKSHOPS. IT IS INTENDED THAT THE WORKSHOP SERIES WILL CONTINUE TO RELY UPON THESE LOCAL RESOURCES IN CARRYING OUT PROGRAMS. FROM TIME TO TIME, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO USE RELEVANT RESOURCES FROM OUTSIDE THE REGION. HOWEVER, THE MAJOR EMPHASIS WILL CONTINUE TO BE ON THE UTILIZATION OF COMPETENT NOVA SCOTIAN EDUCATORS AS RESOURCE PERSONNEL.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXAMPLE OF VOLUNTEER SUPPORT. A SURVEY OF ONE OF OUR RECENT WORKSHOPS REVEALED THAT OF THE 100 PARTICIPANTS REGISTERED FOR THE SESSIONS APPROXIMATELY THIRTY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED AS PROGRAMME PLANNERS, GROUP LEADERS, RESOURCE PERSONNEL, AND EVALUATORS. A TRANSLATION OF THIS VOLUNTEER TIME AND TALENT INTO DOLLARS AND CENTS REPRESENTS A VERY SIGNIFICANT VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION - RESIDENTIAL SETTING

THE WORKSHOP SERIES HAS NO PARTICULAR HOME. OUR PROGRAMMES ARE CONDUCTED IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE PROVINCE USUALLY IN HOTELS OR MOTELS. THERE ARE CERTAIN PLACES THAT HAVE BECOME FAVORITES OVER THE YEARS SUCH AS THE OLD ORCHARD INN IN THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY ESPECIALLY DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER; AND THE HOLIDAY INN IN HALIFAX IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY. WE TRY TO ALTERNATE BETWEEN A RURAL AND URBAN SETTING AND MOST OFTEN THE CONDITIONS OF WEATHER DURING THE WINTER MONTHS USUALLY DICTATE THE MOST PRACTICAL PLACE. BECAUSE OF THE RESIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE PROGRAMME, SUCH THINGS AS SWIMMING POOLS, SAUNAS, ETC., ARE A PRIME CONSIDERATION.

METHOD OF ADVERTISING

A SATISFIED CUSTOMER IS THE BEST FORM OF ADVERTISING AND THE ONE ON WHICH WE HAVE LEARNED TO RELY MOST HEAVILY. IN ADDITION, OUR SPONSORING BODIES THAT HAVE MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS, SUCH AS THE TEACHERS UNION AND THE SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO GIVE US FREE SPACE FOR NOTICES, ETC. IN ADDITION, THE MEMBERS OF THESE TWO BODIES WHO SIT ON OUR GENERAL PLANNING COMMITTEE ARE ALWAYS EXCELLENT RECRUITERS FOR ANY OF THE PROGRAMMES. I GUESS OUR ADVERTISING CAN BE CONSIDERED UNIQUE BECAUSE IT IS FREE.

THE COORDINATOR

I INCLUDED THIS POINT AS A UNIQUE FEATURE BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN TRAINED AND EDUCATED AS AN ADULT EDUCATOR. WHEN IT CAME TIME FOR THE AIE TO HIRE A NEW PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME, THEY DID NOT ADVERTISE FOR SOMEONE WITH A DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED. THEIR JOB DESCRIPTION DID NOT NAME A

SPECIALIZATION BUT WHEN I READ THEIR ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE JOB DESCRIPTION THAT IT OUTLINED, I WAS CONVINCED THAT THEY NEEDED AN ADULT EDUCATOR. WHEN I WAS SHORT LISTED AND CALLED INTO THE INSTITUTE FOR AN INTERVIEW, I DID NOT HAVE A HARD JOB CONVINCING THEM THAT THEY WERE NOT ONLY LOOKING FOR ME BUT FOR MY SKILLS AS AN ADULT EDUCATOR. I THINK IT WAS TO THE CREDIT OF THE AIE THAT THEY RECOGNIZED THIS NEED. ADULT EDUCATORS ARE INDEED GAINING THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN NOVA SCOTIA.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

STIMULATING! THOUGHT-PROVOKING! INFORMATIVE! EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY!

THESE WORDS, IN ADDITION TO MAKING A JUDGMENT ON AN EXPERIENCE, ALSO REFLECT THE FEELINGS OF MOST OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHO ATTENDED THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS. THESE REMARKS ALSO MAKE A VALUE JUDGMENT ON THE WORTH OF THE EXPERIENCE FOR THOSE WHO ATTENDED BY IMPLYING THAT THE PROGRAMMES HAD POSITIVE EFFECTS.

THE PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN WELL-ATTENDED OVER THE YEARS. THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS HAS VARIED FROM THIRTY-TWO (THE SMALLEST) TO ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIX (THE LARGEST). IN GENERAL, THE SESSIONS HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED TO BE OF VALUE TO THE BOARD MEMBERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND OTHERS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE VARIOUS PROGRAMMES. THIS CONCLUSION IS BASED ON THE RESULTS OF EVALUATION SHEETS COLLECTED AT THE END OF EACH WORKSHOP AND ALSO FROM THE FACT THAT MANY SATISFIED PARTICIPANTS CONTINUE TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE PROGRAMMES ON A REGULAR BASIS.

IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION, "IS THE WORKSHOP MODEL EFFECTIVE?" - THE ANSWER IS "YES". HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO THE QUERIES, "HOW, WHEN, WHY, TO WHAT DEGREE, AND WITH WHAT DIFFERENCES?" - THE ANSWERS WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE AND, BECAUSE I WANTED TO KNOW, I SET ABOUT THE TASK OF FINDING OUT FOR MYSELF.

HOW DID I FIND OUT?

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SUCH WORKSHOPS, I WENT TO THE PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED AND ASKED THEM ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES. ACCORDINGLY, I SURVEYED OVER 450 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS WHOSE NAMES WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED FROM THE REGISTRY OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS.

FOLLOWING THIS CHOICE, I THEN MADE DECISIONS ABOUT THE LIMITATIONS AND PURPOSES OF THE STUDY WHICH CAN BE DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: FIRST, TO DETERMINE THE SPECIFIC WAYS THE WORKSHOPS CONTRIBUTED TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT; SECOND, TO ASCERTAIN WHAT EVENTS IN THE PROGRAMMES CONTRIBUTED TO THIS POSITIVE DIRECTION; THIRD, TO GATHER INFORMATION FOR FUTURE PLANNING. THE INTENTION IN THIS PARTICULAR SESSION THIS EVENING IS TO DEAL WITH THE DATA GENERATED BY THE SECOND QUESTION, THE IDENTIFICATION OF THOSE WORKSHOP EXPERIENCES WHICH PARTICIPANTS REGARDED AS MOST SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF LEARNING.

THE NEXT STEP IN THE PROCESS WAS THE DESIGN OF A QUESTIONNAIRE. THEREFORE, KEEPING IN MIND THE INTENT OF THE STUDY, A TWO-PART INSTRUMENT WAS THEN FORMULATED. PART I WAS DESIGNED TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENT'S POSITION, ATTENDANCE AT THE WORKSHOP, AND MAJOR REASONS THAT AFFECTED THEIR CHOICE OF PROGRAMMES. A SUB-SECTION OF THIS FIRST PART WAS PLANNED TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE SPECIFIC WAYS THE WORKSHOPS CONTRIBUTED TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TO DETERMINE WHAT EVENTS OR HAPPENINGS THE PARTICIPANTS REGARDED AS MOST SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF LEARNING IMPACT. PART II WAS DESIGNED TO OBTAIN INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN FUTURE PLANNING.

WHAT DID I FIND OUT?

IN DEALING WITH THE DATA, THE INFORMATION WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPINGS: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS. IN THE RESPONSES FROM THESE TWO GROUPS, COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES WERE NOTED. IN THE AREA OF DIFFERENCES, FOR EXAMPLE, ADMINISTRATORS

NOTED LEARNINGS ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL AS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHILE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS CITED LEARNING IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RELATIONS AS BEING MOST IMPORTANT FOR THEM.

COMMONALITIES WERE NOTED PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF WORKSHOP EXPERIENCES AND IT IS THIS PARTICULAR DATA THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU. FOR ME, THE BOTTOM LINE IN MOST OF THESE EXAMPLES CENTERS AROUND COMING TOGETHER - DIALOGUE.

INGREDIENTS THAT PROMOTE LEARNING

WORKSHOP EXPERIENCES THAT PROMOTED LEARNING FELL INTO FIVE CATEGORIES WHICH I HAVE CHOSEN TO CALL INGREDIENTS THAT PROMOTE ADULT LEARNING, AND THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT;
- GIVING PARTICIPANTS OPPORTUNITIES TO SHAPE THE DIRECTION AND CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME;
- DESIGNING WORKSHOP CONTENT SO THAT IT RELATES TO THE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE OF THE PARTICIPANTS;
- ENABLING PARTICIPANTS TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH THE IDEAS PRESENTED DURING THE WORKSHOP;
- INTEGRATING EVALUATION PROCEDURES INTO THE ENTIRE PROGRAMME.

1. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

THIS INCLUDES: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT, AND THE REDUCTION OF OBSTACLES TO LEARNING.

FOR EXAMPLE, UNDER PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IS INCLUDED ROOM ARRANGEMENT, FURNITURE AND OTHER FIXTURES, AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT AND THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR UTILIZING IT, SCHEDULING, ARRANGEMENT FOR FOOD AND BEVERAGES, AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLIES, WASHROOM FACILITIES AND SO ON. WHILE THESE SEEM OBVIOUS POINTS FOR ANY PLANNER, WE ALL KNOW THAT NO PLANNING IN THESE AREAS CAN LEAD TO AN UNFORTUNATE EXPERIENCE. MANY PARTICIPANTS NOTED THAT CARE CONCERNING THE PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THEIR LEARNING.

PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS IN THIS AREA THAT WE HAVE CAPITALIZED ON OVER THE YEARS AND ONE WHICH WAS RATED VERY HIGHLY BY PARTICIPANTS WAS THE MEALS. FOOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PROGRAMME AND A GREAT DEAL OF ENERGY GOES INTO THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EACH MEAL FUNCTION DURING THE PLANNING STAGES OF THE WORKSHOP. NOTHING IS EVER LEFT TO CHANCE AND A DETAILED FUNCTION SHEET IS WORKED OUT WITH THE MANAGER AND CHEF OR THEIR COUNTERPARTS AT EACH LOCATION WHERE THE PROGRAMMES ARE HELD.

ONE MEAL FUNCTION THAT HAS BEEN VERY POPULAR HAS BEEN THE ARRANGED BREAKFAST. EARLY IN THE MORNING, SCHOOL PEOPLE SEEM TO BE ALL BUSINESS — CHIT-CHAT IS KEPT TO A MINIMUM AND SERIOUS DISCUSSION ABOUT THE TOPIC AT HAND OR RELATED TOPICS APPEARS TO BE GOING ON. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOCIAL SITUATIONS WHERE YOU CAN DO SOME SERIOUS DISCUSSION, THE INCLUSION OF BREAKFAST INCREASES THOSE TIMES.

I NOTED WITH INTEREST IN THE MAY 10, 1982 ISSUE OF TIME MAGAZINE, IN THE ECONOMY AND BUSINESS SECTION, AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "QUITE EARLY ONE MORNING". IT STATED AS FOLLOWS:

> FOR THIS YEAR'S EXECUTIVE, A COVETED SYMBOL OF UPWARD MOBILITY IS NOT THE POCKET PAGER OR EVEN THE IN-CAR TELEPHONE, BUT A HIGH-VISIBILITY CONFAB OVER COFFEE AND CROISSANTS. THE BUSINESS BREAKFAST HAS ARRIVED. WHETHER IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION, CATCH UP WITH THE JAPANESE OR JUST GET AWAY FROM THE OFFICE TELEPHONE, MORE AND MORE CORPORATE CHIEFTAINS ARE GATHERING AT ORDINARILY UNCIVILIZED HOURS LIKE 7:30 TO MAKE DEALS.

WHAT HAS NEVER CEASED TO AMAZE ME HAS BEEN THE ALMOST 100% ATTENDANCE AT A 7:30 BREAKFAST. WHY IS THIS FUNCTION SO POPULAR WITH EDUCATORS - PERHAPS YOU HAVE AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION, I DON'T. ALL I KNOW IS THAT THE FUNCTION IS POPULAR AND PRODUCTIVE.

OVER THE YEARS, OUR PARTICIPANTS HAVE HELPED US IN MAKING THE ARRANGED BREAKFAST A KEY FUNCTION. SUGGESTIONS FOR A SEPARATE ROOM, SMALL TABLES FOR FOUR TO SIX PEOPLE WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF RESERVING TABLES FOR A PARTICULAR GROUP, A BUFFET-STYLE MEAL WITH COFFEE

SERVICE, HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ARRANGED BREAKFAST.

ANOTHER POSITIVE SPIN-OFF FROM THIS ARRANGEMENT IS THAT THE FIRST SESSION IN THE MORNING BEGINS ON TIME WITH EVERYONE IN ATTENDANCE AND READY TO GO - PEOPLE SEEM TO BE IN TOP GEAR AT THIS POINT. IN FACT THE PROGRAMME PLANNERS HAVE FOUND THIS PERIOD TO BE VERY PRODUCTIVE IN TERMS OF SMALL GROUP WORK ON PARTICULAR ISSUES.

ANOTHER POPULAR FOOD FEATURE IS CONTINUOUS COFFEE AND TEA RATHER THAN BEVERAGES SERVED AT A PARTICULAR TIME. MORE AND MORE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY DURING THE MORNING HOURS SEEM TO PREFER JUICE, SO THE AVAILABILITY OF THIS ITEM IS ALSO APPRECIATED. INSTEAD OF DOUGHNUTS OR DANISH, PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE DIET CONSCIOUS, APPRECIATE WHAT THEY CALL A NUTRITION SNACK, SO VEGETABLES OR FRUITS HAVE ALSO PROVED TO BE A HAPPY ADDITION.

AT ONE TIME, LUNCHES AND DINNERS WERE USED AS OCCASIONS FOR BRINGING IN SPECIAL SPEAKERS TO TALK TO THE GROUP. OUR PARTICIPANTS HAVE STRONGLY SUGGESTED THAT THIS TIME COULD BETTER BE USED IN DIALOGUE WITH EACH OTHER. FOR LUNCH, THE BUFFET MODEL HAS BEEN USED WITH A GREAT DEAL OF SUCCESS. DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, THE OPTION OF SITTING AT A TABLE INSIDE OR OUTSIDE HAS ALSO PROVED TO BE VERY POPULAR.

SINCE DINNERS ARE VERY COSTLY, WE HAVE INTRODUCED THE CONCEPT OF <u>DINNER ON YOUR OWN</u> — THE PLANNING COMMITTEE BUILDS IN ENOUGH TIME FOR THIS TO HAPPEN AND SUGGESTIONS ARE MADE FOR NEARBY RESTAURANTS. WE HAVE FOUND THAT PEOPLE FORM GROUPS AND GO OFF TOGETHER WITH MANY DECIDING TO STAY AT THE LOCAL HOTEL/MOTEL AND TAKING THEIR MEAL THERE.

ON THIS MATTER OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, ROBY KIDD (1973) TELLS US, "THE KEY TO LEARNING IS ENGAGEMENT (P. 266)." NO DOUBT THE RESPONDENTS IN BOTH GROUPS, ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS VIEWED THE RELATIONSHIPS ESTABLISHED DURING THE PERIODS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION, WHETHER THESE BE ARRANGED MEALS OR FREE TIME SLOTS, AS

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT HELPED FOSTER THIS IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS, A TIME WHEN SIGNIFICANT LEARNING TOOK PLACE. ROBY KIDD, IN EMPHASIZING THE VALUE OF THIS TYPE OF COMMUNICATION, FURTHER POINTS OUT:

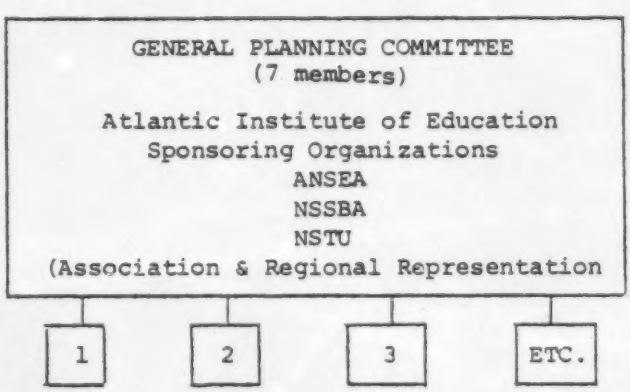
> "SO IMPORTANT IS THIS FACT IN ITS MANY RAMIFICATIONS THAT SOME PSYCHOLOGISTS, POETS, AND EDUCATIONISTS HAVE SAID THAT ALL LEARNING IS A DIALOGUE BETWEEN LEARNER-AUTHOR, OR LEARNER-TEACHER, OR LEARNER-FELLOW LEARNERS. IT IS WHEN THE CONDITIONS FOR THIS DIALOGUE ARE NOT PRESENT THAT WE FEAR THE CONSEQUENCES." (P. 224)

2. <u>GIVING PARTICIPANTS OPPORTUNITIES TO SHAPE THE DIRECTION AND CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME</u>

PROGRAMME PLANNING IS INVARIABLY A PRAGMATIC ENTERPRISE BASED ON COMPROMISE. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE CONFLICTS BETWEEN WHAT IS VALUED AND WHAT SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS THERE ARE ON THE TIME, ENERGY, MONEY, RSOURCES, AND SKILLS OF THE PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED.

MOST ADULT EDUCATORS VALUE INTERDEPENDENT PLANNING, AND EVEN THOUGH WE, AT THE AIE, SOMETIMES SLIP INTO A VERTICAL MODEL IN OUR PLANNING FOR THE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS, I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE SUCCEEDED OVER THE YEARS IN DEVELOPING A HORIZONTAL MODEL WHICH WORKS AND WHICH HAS SATISFIED OUR PARTICIPANTS.

THE MODEL WE USE IS THIS:



Programme Planning Committee (Drawn from the Field)

THERE IS NOTHING THAT PEOPLE IN NOVA SCOTIA MIND MORE THAN THE EXPERT TO ARRIVE FROM THE BIG CITIES IN CANADA — TORONTO OR MONTREAL — OR FROM THE STATES TO TELL THEM WHAT THEY SHOULD KNOW OR WHAT THEY SHOULD DO. EXPERTS FROM THE OUTSIDE CAN BE BROUGHT IN AND HAVE BEEN BROUGHT IN AND PERFORMED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS, BUT ONLY WHEN THE SUGGESTION TO BRING THEM IN HAS ORIGINATED FROM THE GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL.

IN ADDITION TO OUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, WE TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY THE FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS THAT WE RECEIVE DURING AND AFTER EACH PROGRAMME. OUR SPONSORING BODIES ARE AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF INFORMATION WHEN IT COMES TO IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS BECAUSE THEY ARE CONSTANTLY IN TOUCH WITH THE GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL.

MANY TIMES DURING THE COURSE OF A WORKSHOP, ESPECIALLY A WORKSHOP THAT HAS INCORPORATED A CHANGE SUGGESTED BY OUR PARTICIPANTS, PEOPLE WILL COMMENT ON THE CHANGE AND EXPRESS A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP BY REMARKING THAT THEY HAD SUGGESTED AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER THAT THIS OR THAT — WHATEVER THE PARTICULAR CASE MIGHT BE — SHOULD HAPPEN. THEY, IN FACT, ARE USUALLY QUITE PLEASED THAT THEY HAVE BEEN HEARD AND CHANGE IS HAPPENING.

I HAVE FOUND FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE THAT THERE IS NOTHING BETTER THAN A SATISFIED CUSTOMER. THIS TYPE OF PERSON IS THE BEST PROMOTER OF YOUR PROGRAMME. SINCE THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME DOES NOT HAVE ANY TYPE OF BUDGET TO DO PROMOTION WORK, OUR SATISFIED CUSTOMERS ARE OUR BEST SOURCE OF BUSINESS. SINCE 1976, THEY HAVE BEEN OUR GREATEST SUPPORTERS AND ADVERTISERS OF OUR WORK.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, I ALSO HAVE FOUND DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF INFORMATION, TOO — YES, WE, TOO, DO NOT SATISFY EVERYONE. LAST YEAR, ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PLANNING COMMITTEE — THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE NSSBA TO BE EXACT — TOLD ME OF A SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON, A YOUNG LAWYER, WHO WAS CRITICAL OF OUR PROGRAMME. I CLEARED PERMISSION TO USE THIS INFORMATION AND WROTE TO THIS PERSON EXPRESSING MY CONCERN AND

SOLICITING HIS IDEAS FOR THE PROGRAMME. A LETTER WAS PROMPTLY RETURNED, THANKING ME FOR WRITING TO HIM AND THEN IN TRUE LAWYER STYLE, SET OUT HIS CASE FOR SOME RECOMMENDED CHANGES. ACTUALLY, NOTHING THAT HE SUGGESTED WAS REVOLUTIONARY — IN FACT, THEY WERE ALL GOOD IDEAS AND EASY TO IMPLEMENT. I THEN WROTE BACK TO HIM, THANKING HIM FOR HIS IDEAS, ETC. AND ASKING HIM TO ASSUME A ROLE AT OUR NEXT WORKSHOP, WHICH HE GLADLY ACCEPTED AND SUBSEQUENTLY PERFORMED QUITE WELL. SINCE THAT TIME, HE HAS BEEN MOST SUPPORTIVE AND HELPFUL WITH HIS IDEAS, ETC.

DURING THE ACTUAL WORKSHOP ITSELF, WE ALLOW ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY IN THE PROGRAMME FOR CHANGES TO HAPPEN. FOR EXAMPLE, LAST YEAR, BECAUSE OF A THREAT OF A MAJOR SNOWSTORM - SNOWSTORMS CAN BE A BIG PROBLEM IN NOVA SCOTIA - AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARTICIPANTS, WE SHORTENED THE PROGRAMME TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO GET AWAY EARLY WHILE STILL PERSERVING THE ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES OF THE AFTERNOON SESSIONS. ON OTHER OCCASIONS, WE HAVE LENGTHENED THE TIME OF GROUP WORK AT THE REQUEST OF THE GROUP LEADERS AND OTHER SUCH MINOR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PROGRAMME.

ONCE PARTICIPANTS HAVE REGISTERED FOR THE PROGRAMME, WE KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THEM BY MAIL, SENDING THEM PRE-CONFERENCE READING MATERIAL, DIRECTIONS, ETC., AT THE SAME TIME SUGGESTING AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US ABOUT THEIR IDEAS FOR THE PROGRAMME. ON THE WHOLE, WE USUALLY DO NOT HEAR FROM PEOPLE, BUT ON OCCASION YOU MIGHT GET A LETTER THAT HAS SOME SUGGESTIONS.

SINCE GIVING PARTICIPANTS OPPORTUNITIES TO SHAPE THE DIRECTION AND CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME IS AN INGREDIENT THAT PROMOTES LEARNING, THIS INPUT HAS HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE PLANNERS AS WELL.

I HAVE OUTLINED SOME OF THE THINGS WE DO TO ENABLE THE PLANNING TO BE ON A HORIZONTAL, INTERDEPENDENT LEVEL. DURING THE DISCUSSION PERIOD, I WOULD WELCOME YOUR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THIS PARTICULAR POINT.

3. DESIGNING WORKSHOP CONTENT SO THAT IT RELATES TO THE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

THIS INGREDIENT FLOWS FROM THE ONE THAT I HAVE JUST DISCUSSED. PLANNING CARRIED OUT LARGELY BY EXPERTS OR PROGRAMME COORDINATORS WITH NO PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT TENDS TO LEAD TO SUBJECT-CENTRED PROGRAMMES AND THEORETICAL PROBLEMS. PLANNING INVOLVING PARTICIPANTS INPUT WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF A PROGRAMME COORDINATOR TENDS TO LEAD TO PROBLEM-CENTRED PROGRAMS AND IMMEDIATE APPLICATION OF SOLUTIONS TO REAL PROBLEMS.

THE ACTUAL CHOICE OF A PROGRAMME MODEL TO USE DEPENDS ON SEVERAL PRIOR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT IS THE BEST AND MOST PRODUCTIVE WAY FOR AN ADULT TO LEARN, AND ABOUT WHAT IS THE MOST PRACTICAL WAY FOR THIS TO HAPPEN. FOR OUR PURPOSES IN PROGRAMME PLANNING, WE HAVE FOUND A COMBINATION OF A PROGRAMMED LEARNING, INFORMATION PROCESSING AND A HUMANISTIC/PERSON-CENTRED MODEL IS THE IDEAL. I SAY, THE IDEAL, BECAUSE IN ANY PARTICULAR SITUATION, DEPENDING ON THE TOPIC, THERE HAPPENS TO BE A LEANING IN ONE DIRECTION OR THE OTHER.

TO THIS END, REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES ARE BUILT INTO THE PROGRAMME. FOR EXAMPLE, LAST YEAR ONE OF OUR THEMES WAS "EVALUATING YOUR SCHOOL SYSTEM". AT THIS WORKSHOP WE HAD AN INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS, WHO WAS PART OF SEVERAL EVALUATION TEAMS, SPEAK ABOUT THE TOPIC FROM HER VANTAGE POINT, THAT OF THE EVALUATOR. THEN WE HAD A SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, WHO ACTUALLY WENT THROUGH THE EVALUATION PROCESS FROM BEGINNING TO END SPEAK ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE PROCESS — THE HUMAN PROBLEMS, THE ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS, THE COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS, DEALING WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, AND FINALLY, HOW THE FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION WERE USED TO BUILD A BETTER SYSTEM. DURING THESE PRESENTATIONS YOU COULD HAVE HEARD A PIN DROP — THESE PEOPLE HAD A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE BECAUSE THEY WERE SPEAKING FROM FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE AND THEY WERE RINGING TRUE WITH THEIR AUDIENCE. THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOWED WERE EXCELLENT AND I NOTICED AT THE RECEPTION THAT FOLLOWED — THEIR PRESENTATION WAS AN EVENING ONE — THAT THEY WERE SOUGHT OUT FOR

FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE ISSUE AND AGAIN I NOTICED THAT THE SAME THING HAPPENED DURING THE ARRANGED BREAKFAST IN THE MORNING. IN FACT, KAY, THE INSPECTOR, TOLD ME THAT SHE SAT UP UNTIL 2 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING WITH ONE PARTICULAR GROUP DISCUSSING THEIR PARTICULAR PROBLEM WITH A SYSTEM EVALUATION — SHE FELT THAT SOME EXCELLENT LEARNING WENT ON DURING THIS AFTER-MIDNIGHT SESSION. MIDNIGHT SESSIONS ARE ALWAYS POSSIBLE SINCE OUR PROGRAMMES ARE CONDUCTED IN A RESIDENTIAL SETTING.

IN ADDITION, SMALL GROUP OR INTEREST GROUP SESSIONS HAVE BEEN VERY VALUABLE IN BRINGING REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES TO THE FORE. IN SMALL GROUP SESSIONS, THE PARTICIPANTS ENJOY WORKING WITH PREPARED QUESTIONS — MOST OFTEN THESE ORIGINATE OR ARE GENERATED AT THE GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL — OR CASE STUDIES THAT ARE EITHER ACTUAL OR A COMPOSITE OF SEVERAL SITUATIONS THAT EXIST IN THE PROVINCE.

REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS PROMOTE LEARNING FOR ADULTS BECAUSE THEIR LEARNING NEEDS GENERALLY ARE RELATED TO CURRENT LIFE SITUATIONS. FOR MANY ADULTS, THE MAJOR PRESSURE FOR CHANGE COMES FROM FACTORS RELATING TO SOCIAL AND WORK VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS, AND TO THE PERSONAL NEED FOR SELF-DEFINITION. SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATORS AND BOARD MEMBERS ARE NO EXCEPTION TO THIS GENERAL RULE BECAUSE THEY, TOO, EXPERIENCE THIS SAME KIND OF PRESSURE IN THEIR WORK.

4. <u>ENABLING PARTICIPANTS TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH IDEAS PRESENTED IN THE COURSE</u>

PARTICIPANTS HAVE BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH THE IDEAS PRESENTED IN THE WORKSHOPS IN A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WAYS. THE USE OF THE SMALL GROUP EITHER FOR A SIMULATION EXERCISE OR FOR THE DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST, IS ONE EXAMPLE OF ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT.

LAST YEAR, I HAD A WORKSHOP ON THE TOPIC OF "STRESS AND MORALE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM". THE PERSON WHO CONDUCTED THE SESSIONS FOR ME WAS ACTUALLY INVOLVED IN DOING RESEARCH IN THE AREA OF TEACHER

STRESS IN NOVA SCOTIA AND HAD SPENT THE EIGHTEEN MONTHS PRIOR TO MY PROGRAMME WORKING WITH THE TEACHERS' UNION LOCALS CONDUCTING STRESS WORKSHOPS AND GATHERING DATA ON THE ACTUAL PROBLEM IN THE PROVINCE. CONTRARY TO THE DENIAL OF THE PROBLEM BY SOME SCHOOL PERSONNEL, WE LEARNED DURING THE SESSIONS THAT NOVA SCOTIA'S TEACHERS ARE VICTIMS OF STRESS, TOO. HOWEVER, WHAT WAS THE REAL EYE-OPENER DURING THESE SESSIONS WAS THAT ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS BEGAN TO SEE THEMSELVES AS CREATORS OF STRESS. FOR MANY OF THEM, THIS WAS A TREMENDOUS LEARNING. UP TO THAT POINT, IF THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THE FACT OF THE EXISTENCE OF STRESS, THEY ALWAYS PUT THE BLAME ON THE STUDENTS, THE PARENTS, OR SOME OUTSIDE FORCES SUCH AS THE FAMILY PROBLEMS OF THE TEACHERS. THE FACT THAT THEY SO READILY ACCEPTED THEIR SHARE OF THE BLAME RATHER THAN DENY ANY SORT OF RESPONSIBILITY CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE SKILLFUL HANDLING OF THIS MATERIAL BY THE PRESENTER.

DURING ONE OF OUR SMALL GROUP SESSIONS, WE USED AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION, A LISTING OF TWENTY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF STRESS WHICH WAS GENERATED BY THE TEACHERS OF NOVA SCOTIA. IN INFORMAL CONVERSATION FOLLOWING THIS WORK GROUP, MANY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TOLD ME THAT THEY WERE LEAVING THE SESSIONS WITH SOME CONCRETE IDEAS THAT THEY COULD EITHER IMPLEMENT IMMEDIATELY OR IN SHORT ORDER.

BILL, MY WORKSHOP DIRECTOR, HAD BROUGHT ALONG SOME TAPES WITH RELAXATION EXERCISES AND ALSO SOME BIO-FEEDBACK EQUIPMENT. HE ALSO BROUGHT ALONG A PERSON TO DEMONSTRATE THIS EQUIPMENT. WE SET UP THIS MATERIAL IN A ROOM AND INVITED PEOPLE TO USE IT DURING THEIR FREE TIME. I WAS AMAZED AT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY, NOT MERELY OUT OF CURIOSITY, BUT OUT OF SINCERE INTEREST AND A DESIRE FOR A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE.

AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE, DURING A TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP, THE PARTICIPANTS GOT VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH IDEAS RELATING TO THEIR PARTICULAR WORK SITUATION. THEY WORKED ON SCHEDULES FOR THEIR OWN TIME MANAGEMENT.

SINCE THIS ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT WAS HIGHLIGHTED AS AN IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN PROMOTING LEARNING, I CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR NEW IDEAS, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF A RESIDENTIAL SETTING. I LOOK FORWARD TO THE SHARING OF IDEAS AT THE END OF THIS SESSION.

5. INTEGRATING EVALUATION PROCEDURES INTO THE ENTIRE PROGRAMME

CONTINUALLY INTEGRATING EVALUATION PROCEDURES WHERE PARTICIPANTS CAN ASSESS WHAT AND HOW THEY ARE LEARNING AND CAN PLAN THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THEIR LEARNING IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT. THIS IS DONE IN DIFFERENT WAYS ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF EACH PROGRAMME. FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER A LEARNING EVENT, IT IS HELPFUL FOR A PARTICIPANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH SUCH THINGS AS:

1. EMOTIONAL REACTIONS BY ASKING THEMSELVES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

   I WAS SURPRISED THAT I . . .?
   I WAS PLEASED THAT I . . .?
   I WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT . . .?
   I LEARNED . . .?

2. INFORMATION RECEIVED BY ASKING THEMSELVES WHAT WERE THEIR MOST SIGNIFICANT LEARNINGS?

3. FEELINGS OF COMPETENCE IN SKILLS AND BEHAVIOUR.

4. VALUE OF GROUP SESSIONS, IF GROUPS WERE USED, BY ASKING IN WHAT WAYS DID THE GROUP CONTRIBUTE TO MY LEARNING, ETC.

MANY PARTICIPANTS FIND THAT THEIR LEARNING IS ENHANCED BY COMING TO GRIPS WITH CERTAIN QUESTIONS. FOR OTHERS, A POST-MEETING REACTION FORM IS A USEFUL TOOL BECAUSE IT ALLOWS FOR A TIME OF REFLECTION ABOUT AN EXPERIENCE, WHILE STILL OTHERS PREFER AN INFORMAL TYPE OF INTERVIEW AS A FORM OF EVALUATION.

ONE THING IS QUITE CLEAR. LEARNING IS ENHANCED BY THE INTEGRATION OF EVALUATION PROCEDURES. I LOOK FORWARD TO SOME IDEAS DURING THE DISCUSSION PERIOD.

IN CONCLUDING THIS SECTION ON EVALUATION, I THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT I SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT EVALUATION AS IT APPLIES TO PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP SERIES BECAUSE EVEN AT THIS LEVEL OF EVALUATION, LEARNING IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT.

OVERALL EVALUATION

IN A DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECT OF THIS NATURE, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT IT BE SUBJECTED TO CLOSE SCRUTINY IF THE ORGANIZATION IS TO MEET ITS OBJECTIVES. OVERALL EVALUATION OF THIS PROGRAMME IS CONDUCTED IN SEVERAL WAYS.

1. THE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS WHO PARTICIPATE AS CLIENTS OF THE WORKSHOP HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO EVALUATE EACH PROGRAM IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED.

2. THE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS ARE REQUESTED TO PROVIDE ANNUAL EVALUATIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AS REVEALED BY THE WAYS IN WHICH THE PROGRAMS IMPROVED THE PERFORMANCE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN THE REGION.

3. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PERIODICALLY SUBMITS TO THE GENERAL PLANNING COMMITTEE AND THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE ATLANTIC INSTITUTE, A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE VARIOUS PROGRAMME DIMENSIONS ALONG WITH SUCH OTHER ASSESSMENTS THAT MAY BE REQUIRED BY THE FOUNDATION.

IN LIGHT OF THE FINDINGS IN THIS STUDY, A HAPPY BALANCE BETWEEN CONTENT AND PROCESS SHOULD BE THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME PLANNERS, FOR ONLY IN THIS WAY CAN THE NEEDS OF BOTH GROUPS BE MET. TO ACHIEVE THIS IDEAL WILL REQUIRE WHAT HOULE (1972) CALLS

"CREATIVENESS, THE EXPENDITURE OF GREAT INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL EFFORT, AND THE USE OF SOPHISTICATED THOUGHT ABOUT THE DESIGN OF EDUCATION" (P. 225), AND WHAT BRUNDAGE AND MCKERACHER (1980) BELIEVE INVOLVES "A SET OF VALUES ABOUT LEARNERS AND LEARNING, TEACHERS AND TEACHING, THE CONTENT TO BE LEARNED, AND THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED." (P. 78)

THE AREAS OF COMMONALITIES THAT SURFACED, ESPECIALLY THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL INTERACTION SHOULD BE GIVEN GREAT IMPORTANCE IN THE OVER-ALL PLANNING PROCESS. THINGS RESPONDENTS LIKED LEAST SHOULD BE ELIMINATED.

"PROGRAM PLANNING IS INVARIABLY A PRAGMATIC ENTERPRISE BASED ON COMPROMISE" (BRUNDAGE AND MCKERACHER, 1980) P. 79. THE WORD, ENTERPRISE, IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT CALLS FOR DARING ACTION AND INITIATIVE. IN A VERY REAL SENSE, BRINGING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS CLOSER TOGETHER AND BETTER SERVING THEIR COLLECTIVE NEEDS CALLS FOR SUCH DARING. ALTERNATE MODELS, SUCH AS THE ANDROGOGICAL MODEL, THE STUDY CIRCLE AND EVEN DISTANCE EDUCATION, HAVE TO BE EXPLORED. IN ADDITION, NEW CONTENT AREAS SUCH AS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE TOPICS HAVE TO BE INTRODUCED.

IN ALL OF THIS, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT PEOPLE, LIKE MYSELF, WHO PERFORM THE PLANNING FUNCTION BE AWARE OF CURRENT RESEARCH ON ADULT LEARNING. WE HAVE TO BE AWARE OF THE IMPACT OF ANDRAGOGY WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON HOW ADULTS LEARN, ACCOMPANIED BY NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO CONTENT AND THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION. ANDRAGOGY, OVER THE YEARS, HAS AWAKENED PROGRAMME PLANNERS TO A BROADER SPECTRUM OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES. WE HAVE TO CREATIVELY USE THESE FINDINGS AND ACCEPT THEM AS A CHALLENGE.

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